

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

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TAGS: EINV, CA

SUBJ: ONTARIO TO PERMIT SALE OF CROWN LAND FOR

SUMMER COTTAGE LOTS

1. ON MARCH 2, NATURAL RESOURCES MINISTER FRANK S. MILLER ANNOUNCED THE ONTARIO CABINET'S DECISION TO ALLOW THE PURCHASE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO CROWN LAND FOR PRIVATE RECREATIONAL USE. DURING THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, SUMMER COTTAGE LOTS ON CROWN LAND WERE AVAILABLE ONLY ON A LEASE BASIS. DURING THE FIRST YEAR AFTER REGISTRATION OF A SUB-DIVISION, ONLY ONTARIO RESIDENTS WERE ELIGIBLE TO LEASE LAND; DURING THE SECOND YEAR CANADIANS FROM OTHER PROVINCES HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO LEASE; AND AFTER THAT, NON-RESIDENTS COULD APPLY FOR ANY REMAINING LOTS. THE NEW PROGRAM APPROVED BY CABINET FOLLOWS THE SAME TIMETABLE, EXCEPT THAT FOR ONTARIANS AND OTHER CANADIANS, LOTS IN THE SUB-DIVISION MAY NOW BE PURCHASED. NON-RESIDENTS WILL STILL BE ABLE TO LEASE LOTS AFTER THE SECOND YEAR.

2. DETAILS ON THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE NEW PROGRAM ARE NOW BEING WORKED OUT AND WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THREE TO FOUR WEEKS TIME.

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3. MEDIA REACTION TO THE MEASURE HAS NOT BEEN FAVORABLE AS THE PROGRAM APPARENTLY WILL PERMIT CANADIANS TO RESELL PROPERTY TO FOREIGNERS. IN CRITICIZING THE MEASURE, THE MARCH 6 GLOBE AND MAIL DREW A PARALLEL TO A FLORIDA LAW REQUIRING OUT-OF-STATE PROPERTY OWNERS TO PAY EXTRA TAXES. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, THE NATIONALIST

THE TORONTO STAR STRONGLY QUESTIONED THE MEASURE.
REPORTEDLY OPPOSITION LEADERS IN THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE
HAVE GIVEN CAUTIOUS APPROVAL TO THE SCHEME.

4. THE MEDIA REPORTED AN INTERNAL DISPUTE IN THE ONTARIO
CABINET OVER LAND SALES TO FOREIGNERS. LAND OWNERSHIP
IS A VERY SENSITIVE ISSUE IN ONTARIO, PARTICULARLY
WITH THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND WITH THE COMMITTEE FOR
INDEPENDENT CANADA. THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE'S 1973
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM
REPORTED THAT 12 PER CENT OF ALL COTTAGE OWNERS IN
ONTARIO IN 1964 CAME FROM THE UNITED STATES WITH NON-
RESIDENT OWNERS REACHING 68 PER CENT IN AREAS SUCH AS
WINDSOR. UNDER THE LEASING PROGRAM WHICH BEGAN IN 1971,
2,300 LOTS WERE AVAILABLE FOR LEASE, 2,100 WERE TAKEN
ON THIRTY YEAR LEASE (RENEWABLE FOR TWO TEN YEAR
PERIODS) AND ONLY 85 OF THE LEASEHOLDS ARE AMERICANS.
THE CROWN LAND WHICH WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR SALE
WILL BE NORTH OF THE FRENCH RIVER AND CROWN LAND IN
SOUTHERN ONTARIO COTTAGE COUNTRY, E.G. MUSKOKA, WILL
NOT BE INCLUDED.

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